

# ***Strategic Regional Arterial***

**ILLINOIS ROUTE 72 /  
HIGGINS ROAD /  
TOUHY AVENUE**

**Illinois Route 25 to Interstate 94**

**DRAFT**



**OPERATION GREENLIGHT**  
**Illinois Department of Transportation**

## Executive Summary

Since the early 1970's, development patterns have reflected a significant migration of people and employment from the City of Chicago to the surrounding suburbs. Though the region's population grew by only 4% during that period, the urbanized area increased by approximately 70%. The new development brought with it dramatically different travel patterns. While the principal transportation systems were designed to efficiently handle traditional suburb-to-city commuting patterns, significant growth occurred in suburb-to-suburb travel. These new travel demands overwhelmed the capacity of many of the region's expressways and arterial streets, causing traffic to spill over into adjacent neighborhoods as drivers sought to avoid congestion. Despite significant investments in transportation improvements over the last two decades, traffic congestion in the Chicago region has increased steadily.

Regional population and employment forecasts imply that even more difficult challenges lie ahead. NIPC has estimated that the region's population will increase as much as 24% between 1990 and 2020 which is four times the growth rate experienced between 1970 and 1990. Employment is expected to increase as much as 37% over the same period. Though growth will continue in the suburbs, significant infill growth is expected to occur in the City of Chicago and inner-ring suburbs as well. If the region's economic vitality and quality of life is to be preserved in the face of this expansion, significant improvements to transportation mobility must be achieved.

Transportation planning agencies have recognized that needed mobility improvements cannot be achieved solely through expansion of the region's expressway system. Thus, they are planning the creation of the Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) system which is a comprehensive network of 1,390 miles of existing arterial highways in Northeastern Illinois. The SRA system is intended to supplement existing and proposed expressway facilities in accommodating long-distance, high volume automobile and commercial vehicle traffic. In order to meet the objectives of the SRA system, it will be necessary to transform the historic context of these arterial highways to one which emphasizes traffic mobility while still accommodating land access needs.

This report summarizes a planning study conducted for one of the routes on the SRA system: IL Route 72/Higgins Road/Touhy Avenue which extends between IL Route 25 and Interstate 94. The study developed a conceptual improvement plan which, when implemented, will significantly improve transportation mobility along the corridor. The study is considered a "pre-Phase I" study, since it may be a number of years before the SRA improvements can be realized. Before constructing these improvements, detailed Phase I engineering and environmental studies as well as Phase II design activities must still be completed. The concept plan is primarily intended to serve as a guide for land

use and access decisions that will be made along the route between now and when an SRA improvement could actually be constructed. It is hoped that the long-range SRA plan for this route will be used by local agencies in their land use planning activities. Only with the support of the communities through which IL Route 72/Higgins Road/Touhy Avenue passes can the ultimate improvement plan be realized.

The IL Route 72/Higgins Road/Touhy Avenue SRA corridor was divided into seven segments for the purposes of this study. Following is a summary of the major improvement recommendations within each segment.

**Segment 1: IL Route 25 to Barrington Road**

- Provide three 12-foot through lanes in each direction separated by a grass center median.
- Provide paved shoulders and open-ditch drainage.
- Maintain existing access and left turn lanes for developed parcels. Consolidate access where feasible on parcels remaining to be developed.

**Segment 2: Barrington Road to Interstate 290**

- Provide three 12-foot through lanes in each direction separated by a 30-foot barrier median. Provide a 10-foot shoulder adjacent to the outside through lanes.
- Provide curb and gutter and an enclosed drainage system.
- Consolidate access to designated channelized intersections/median openings and restrict driveways to right-in/right-out.

**Segment 3: Interstate 290 to Arlington Heights Road**

- Provide three 12-foot through lanes in each direction separated by an 18-foot barrier median.
- Provide curb and gutter and an enclosed drainage system.
- Temporary grading easements may be required.

**Segment 4: Arlington Heights Road to Interstate 294**

- From Arlington Heights Road to Busse Road/Oakton Street, provide three 12-foot through lanes in each direction separated by an 18-foot barrier median. Provide curb and gutter and an enclosed drainage system. Maintain existing frontage road between Arlington Heights Road and Wildwood Road. Between Wildwood Road and Busse Road, 5 feet of right-of-way will be acquired on the north side and 20 feet on the south side.
- From Busse Road/Oakton Street to Wolf Road, provide three 12-foot through lanes in each direction separated by a 16-foot mountable median. Provide curb and gutter and an enclosed drainage system. Fifteen feet of right-of-way will be acquired from the north side and 5 feet from the south side.

- From Wolf Road to I-294, provide three 11 or 12-foot through lanes in each direction separated by an 18-foot barrier median. Provide curb and gutter and an enclosed drainage system. From Wolf Road to Lee Street, 10 feet of right-of-way will be acquired from each side and from Lee Street to I-294, 5 feet will be acquired from each side.

**Segment 5 Interstate 294 to Harlem Avenue**

- From I-294 to Talcott Road, provide two 12-foot through lanes in each direction separated by a 4-foot barrier median. Provide 4-foot paved shoulders and open-ditch drainage.
- From Talcott Road to Harlem Avenue, provide two 11-foot through lanes in each direction. Provide curb and gutter and an enclosed drainage system. Provide left turn lanes at some intersections. At minor side streets, restrict access to right-in/right-out or construct cul-de-sacs.

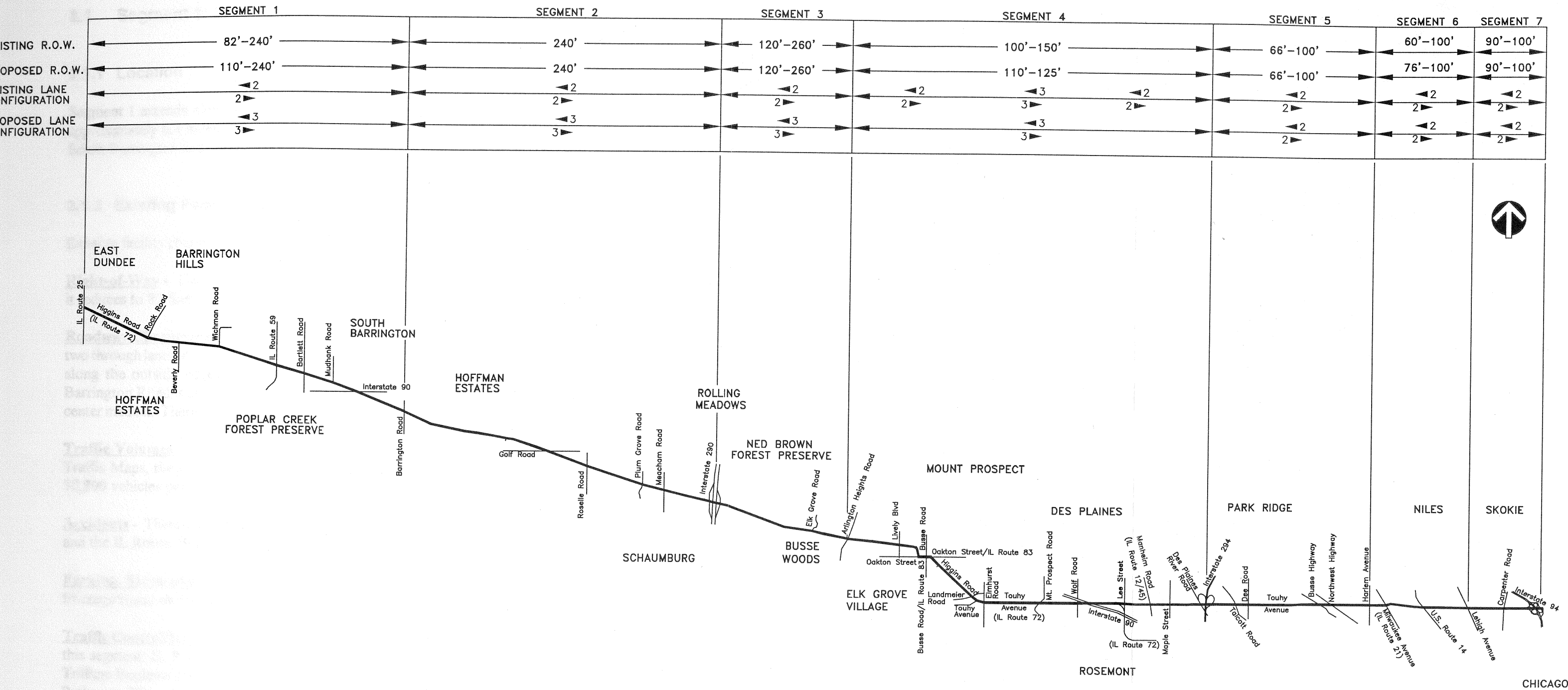
**Segment 6: Harlem Avenue to Lehigh Avenue**

- Provide two 11-foot through lanes in each direction separated by an 11-foot painted median.
- Provide curb and gutter and an enclosed drainage system.
- From Harlem Avenue to Caldwell Avenue, 8 feet of right-of-way will be acquired on each side.

**Segment 7: Lehigh Avenue to Interstate 94**

- Provide two 12-foot through lane sin each direction separated by an 18-foot barrier median.
- Provide curb and gutter and an enclosed drainage system.
- Between Laramie and Lavergne Avenues, 4 feet of right-of-way will be acquired on the south side.





CHICAGO

